

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

TRSE-00 OMB-01 /067 W

-----116671 302217Z /75

R 300800Z JUN 78

FM AMCONSUL NAHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2670

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CG USAGO MACHINATO

CG 313 AD/18TFW KADENA AFB

COMFLEACTS OKINAWA

CG MARCORB CAMP BUTLER

OAC CAMP BUTLER

CG THIRD MAF CAMP COURNEY

THIRD MARINE DIVISION

CG FIRST MAW, CAMP BUTLER

COMUSJAPANYOKOTA AFB

CG 5TH AF YOKOTA JAPAN

CG USARJ CAMP ZAMA JAPAN

COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JAPAN

CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HAWAII

CG FMFPAC CAMP SMITH HAWAII

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CINC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652. GDS

TAGS. MARR, JA

SUBJ. ASSESSMENT OF OKINAWAN ENVIROMENT FOR US MILITARY BASES

1. SUMMARY. DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF US POSITION IN OKINAWA, BASED ON SIX YEARS ANALYSIS BEFORE AND AFTER REVERSION, CONCLUDES THAT FUTURE OF OUR MILITARY BASES DEPENDS ON SKILLFUL HANDLING OF LOCAL
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PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY WITH COMMUNITIES IN VICINITY OF BASES, AND CONTINUED FULL SUPPORT OF GOJ. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ARE MY FINAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE US POSITION HERE AS I DEPART OKINAWA AND THE SERVICE OF USG.

3. THE US DECISION TO RETURN OKINAWA TO JAPAN WAS AN EMINENTLY WISE, FAR-SIGHTED AND INDEED HISTORIC DECISION, NOT ONLY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF US RELATIONS WITH JAPAN BUT ALSO FROM THE

STANDPOINT OF OUR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE OUR MILITARY BASES IN OKINAWA OVER THE YEARS AHEAD.

4. CURRENT SITUATION, DIFFICULT THOUGH IT IS, CANNOT COMPARE WITH THE MAGNITUDE AND NUMBER OF PROBLEMS AND ANTI BASE ACTIVITIES AND THE TENSIONS BETWEEN OUR BASES AND THE OKINAWAN POPULATION WHICH EXISTED PRIOR TO REVERSION. KEY TO THIS CHANGE WAS REMOVAL OF AN

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ALIEN US ADMINISTRATION WHICH I BELIEVE HAD NO CHANCE OF OVERCOMING BARRIERS OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE TO DEVELOP STABLE LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH OKINAWANS.

5. REVERSION HAS BROUGHT MANY IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR POSITION WHICH THOSE OF US ON OKINAWA DURING THE 1968-72 PERIOD HAD EXPECTED OR HOPED FOR. RELINQUISHMENT OF US POLICE POWER OFF-BASE AND OF US CRIMINAL JURISDICTION OVER CASES INVOLVING OKINAWANS HAS IN PARTICULAR REMOVED A DANGEROUS POTENTIAL FOR INFLAMING OKINAWAN EMOTIONS AGAINST OUR MILITARY BASES. THE HANDLING OF MANY OKINAWAN PROBLEMS THROUGH THE SOFA MACHINERY LOCATED NOT IN OKINAWA BUT AT THE TOKYO LEVEL AND THE USE OF THE INDIRECT HIRE SYSTEM FOR BASE WORKERS HAS ALSO GREATLY REDUCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN OKINAWA AND OUR BASES. OVER A WIDE SPECTRUM, JAPANESE ADMINISTRATION OF OKINAWA HAS REMOVED US AUTHORITIES FROM THE FRONT-LINE VIS-A-VIS THE OKINAWANS AND TURNED OKINAWAN ATTENTION AND ENERGIES TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE GOJ IN TOKYO. AT THE SAME
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TIME, INCORPORATION WITHIN THE JAPANESE ECONOMY AND BODY POLITIC HAS ACCELERATED A PROCESS OF NATIONALIZATION, WHICH IS BEGINNING TO INCLUDE A GRADUAL TOLERANCE OF US BASES AS A FIXTURE OF LIFE ON OKINAWA.

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6. NONETHELESS OKINAWA REMAINS A DIFFICULT, POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR MILITARY BASES. BASIC REASON IS THAT OKINAWANS CONTINUE TO HARBOR FUNDAMENTALLY UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES, WHICH ARE MORE PACIFIST AND ANTI-MILITARY THAN ANTI-AMERICAN IN NATURE, DERIVED FROM THEIR BATTLE OF OKINAWA EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR II. THESE MEMORIES ARE KEPT ALIVE BY MANY OKINAWAN SCHOOL TEACHERS AND BY OKINAWAN NEWS MEDIA, WHICH EVEN NOW RUN FRONT PAGE ACCOUNTS OF THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA AND THE SUFFERINGS OF THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR YEARS FOR DAYS AND MONTHS ON END. AS ONE SENIOR GOJ OFFICIAL PUT IT WITH ONLY SOME EXAGGERATION, OKINAWANS, UNLIKE MAINLAND JAPANESE, STILL TALK OF WORLD WAR II AS IF IT WERE AN EXPERIENCE WHICH HAPPENED YESTERDAY INSTEAD OF OVER 30 YEARS AGO.
7. WE ARE CONFRONTED AT LEAST UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR AND PREFECTURAL ASSEMBLY IN MID-1980 WITH REFORMIST LOCAL

GOVERNMENT WHICH ADHERES TO LONG STANDING ELECTION PLATFORM OF DEMANDING WITHDRAWAL OF ALL MILITARY BASES. US AND GOJ AUTHORITIES ARE IN A CONFRONTATION SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT.

8. I HAVE RECLUCTANTLY CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS IN FACT AN UNBRIDGEABLE GAP BETWEEN THE SO-CALLED FEELINGS OF THE OKINAWAN

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PEOPLE (KENMINKANJOO) AND VARIOUS ACTIVITIES OUR MILITARY SERVICES MUST ENGAGE IN TO CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNED MISSIIONS. THERE WILL PROBABLY ALWAYS BE SOME MILITARY ACTIVITIES INCLUDING B52 VISITS WHICH ENCOUNTER AN UNFAVORABLE OKINAWAN CONSENSUS WHICH REQUIRES CONFIDENTIAL

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EVEN CONSERVATIVE OKINAWANS WHO SUPPORT THE SECURITY TREATY AND PRESENCE OF MILITARY BASES TO JOIN IN PROTEST. MOREOVER, WE CANNOT HOPE TO HAVE POSITIVE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR BASE ACTIVITIES WHICH IN FACT INTRUDE ON THE DAILY LIVES OF OKINAWANS, E.G. AIRCRAFT NOISE AND INCIDENTS OFF-BASE.

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CINCPAC ALSO POLAD

9. IN ADDITION, OKINAWAN NEWS MEDIA, THROUGH WHICH OKINAWANS RECEIVE SO MUCH OF THEIR INFORMATION, REMAIN FUNDAMENTALLY AND ACTIVELY OPPOSED TO OUR MILITARY BASES AND CONTINUE TO BE OFTEN TIMES AN INSUPERABLE OBSTACLE TO GETTING ACCURATE INFORMATION AND US VIEWPOINTS TO OKINAWANS AT LARGE. THERE ARE FEW INDICATIONS THAT THIS SITUATION WILL CHANGE FOR SOME YEARS TO COME.
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10. IF ONE WERE TO JUDGE BY WHAT IS CARRIED BY THE NEWS MEDIA, IT IS HARD TO DETECT ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN OKINAWAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS OUR BASES SINCE REVERSION. HOWEVER, I TEND TO AGREE WITH VARIOUS SENIOR OKINAWAN CONTACTS WHO BELIEVE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN OKINAWAN PREOCCUPATION WITH BASE ISSUES TO OTHER MATTERS TOUCHING THEIR DAILY LIVES. THE MAJORITY OF OKINAWANS, WHO LIVE IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE FEW OR NO MILITARY BASES, ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH ECONOMIC AND OTHER LOCAL PROBLEMS AND DO NOT HAVE A DIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST IN MILITARY BASE ISSUES. PREOCCUPATION WITH THE ECONOMY (AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE VERY HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR WHICH THERE IS NO ANSWER IN SIGHT OTHER THAN MIGRATION TO MAINLAND JAPAN) IS ALSO BECOMING EVIDENT IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN OKINAWA WHERE OUR BASES ARE

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CONCENTRATED. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE HAVE A VALUABLE RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL TOWARDS THE US, PARTICULARLY IN THE BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITY WORLDS, WHICH IT WOULD BEHOOVE US TO PRESERVE AND REINFORCE THROUGH SUCH PROGRAMS AS TRADE PROMOTION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE. WE SHOULD PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY IN ESTABLISHING AN ICA FSL POSITION AT THIS CONGEN TO EXPLOIT THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE AT THE HAND TO DEVELOP GOODWILL THAT COULD HELP COUNTER

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ACT UNFAVORABLE OKINAWAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MILITARY BASES.
11. RELATIONS WITH OKINAWAN COMMUNITIES IN VICINITY OF OUR MILITARY BASES ARE AND WILL ALWAYS BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, AND US MILITARY

COMMANDERS AND CONGEN MUST CONTINUE TO HANDLE WITH CLOSE ATTENTION, CARE AND POLITICAL SKILL EACH POINT OF FRICTION, HOWEVER MINOR IT MIGHT SEEM AT FIRST GLANCE. IF WE CAN RETAIN THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THESE COMMUNITIES IN THE PRESENCE AND OPERATIONS OF OUR BASES, WE (AND THE GOJ) WILL BE IN A STRONG POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE OUTSIDE
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ACTIVE OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WHO WILL ALWAYS BE SEEKING THE CURTAILMENT AND REMOVAL OF MILITARY BASES.

12. THE KEY TO THE FUTURE OF OUR MILITARY BASES ON OKINAWA REMAINS, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE GOJ IN TOKYO. WITH ITS UNIQUE PATTERNS OF THOUGHT AND ACTION OKINAWA REMAINS ALMOST A CLOSED

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SOCIETY FOR MAINLAND JAPANESE AS WELL AS FOR AMERICANS AND IT TAKES MAINLAND GOJ OFFICIALS A LONG TIME TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN HOW TO COPE WITH OKINAWAN PROBLEMS. THERE IS A NATURAL INCLINATION ON THE PART OF MAINLAND JAPANESE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH PROTEST AGAINST OUR MILITARY BASES WHICH ARE VOICED BY DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS. WE MUST STRIVE TO ENSURE THAT KEY GOJ OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY AT THE TOKYO LEVEL, CONTINUE TO HAVE A SUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MILITARY REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE FULL GOJ SUPPORT IN SITUATIONS WHERE CONCESSIONS TO OKINAWAN PRESSURES WOULD IMPOSE SERIOUS LIMITATIONS ON OUR USE OF OUR MILITARY BASES. AT THE SAME TIME, US MILITARY SERVICES WILL HAVE TO BE WILLING TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS FROM TIME TO TIME PROVIDED THEY DO NOT REALLY IMPAIR OUR CAPABILITY TO OPERATE FROM OUR OKINAWAN BASES.

13. IN CONCLUSION, I AM REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR BASES ON OKINAWA PROVIDED OUR MILITARY COMMANDERS CONTINUE TO HANDLE LOCAL PROBLEMS WITH POLITICAL SENSITIVITY AND SKILL AND PROVIDED WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FULL SUPPORT FROM GOJ.

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